

GREAT CORN ISLAND AND LITTLE CORN ISLAND

POLITICAL

The Corn Islands are not possessions of the United States. In 1914, they were leased by the United States for ninety-nine years. Although the terms of the agreement make the Corn Islands subject exclusively to the laws and sovereign authority of the United States, as a matter of fact the Nicaraguan Government has continued in the local administration of the islands, with the acquiescence of the United States. The right to the use of the islands, whether that use is actual or potential, remains unimpaired.

PHYSICAL

From "Sailing Directions for the East Coasts of Central America and Mexico", published by the United States Hydrographic Office, 1952, I quote brief summaries of the physical geography of each of the islands:

Great Corn Island (12° 10' North, 83° 08' West)

About 2 1/2 miles long and about 2 miles wide, lies about 38 miles east-northeastward of El Bluff (Bluefields Bluff). Mount Pleasant is a 370 foot peak in the middle of the northern part of the island, and there is a 100-foot bluff at the southern end. The island is surrounded by foul ground extending about 1/4 mile to 1 1/2 miles offshore.

Little Corn Island (12° 18' North, 82° 15' West)

About 1 1/2 miles long, 1/2 mile wide, and 125 feet high, lies about 7 1/2 miles north-northeastward of Great Corn Island. The northern end and the eastern side are fringed by reefs extending about 1/2 to 1 mile offshore. The western side of the island is fairly steep-to with shoal water extending 250 to 500 yards offshore beyond which there are depths of 4 to 5 fathoms with the 5-fathom curve about 1/4 to 1/2 mile offshore. A light is shown on the island.

TRANSPORTATION

The latest information we have on transportation to the island is that small sailing vessels operate weekly mail and passenger service between Bluefields, Nicaragua and Great Corn Island.

POPULATION

From the Nicaraguan National Statistical Office comes the following census figures as of February 1951:

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Great Corn Island: Total population of 1,304 (a 1940 figure gave an estimate of 900 for the Corn Islands)

Nicaraguans	1241
Colombians	20
British subjects	29
Panamanians	6
Costa Ricans	2
Hondurans	2
Chinese	2
Jamaican	1
Cayman Islander	1

Of these people, about 200 are reported as Caucasian; the remainder are negro or "zambo" (mixed negro and Indian)

Language:

The above 1,304 inhabitants are also listed according to language preference: 1,258 prefer English; 33 prefer Spanish; and 13 prefer Miskito.

Religion:

All but three of the inhabitants are rated as to religion: Protestant 1,250; Roman Catholic 51.

Education:

Only 4 percent of the population are reported to have a high school education. At the other extreme, 11 percent are illiterate.

Economy:

Agriculture is the principal industry on the island, with about 90 percent of the working population listed as farmers. Another 5 percent more or less, are fishermen, and the remainder barbers, merchants, carpenters, etc.

Most of the land, thanks to fertile volcanic soil, is occupied by coconut and banana plantations.

Little Corn Island:

According to the Nicaraguan census there are no inhabitants on this island.